

Space News ROUNDUP!

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Incubator to help business use technology

By Audrey Schwartz-Rivers

Combine advanced technologies developed for human space flight at JSC with the University of Houston's science and business acumen, and Texas gains an innovative resource to take its high-technology sector to new heights.

The UH-NASA Technology Commercialization Incubator is designed to help local small and mid-sized businesses commercialize space technology. NASA plans to con-

tribute \$1.2 million over three years to the project. The University of Houston provides the commercialization and research expertise of its science, business and engineering faculties. In addition, UH houses the incubator facilities.

"This is a major step in forming a relationship among the university, government and industry and carries out an important part of UH's mission. We will have a significant impact in Houston," said Arthur

Vailas, UH vice president for research and vice provost for graduate studies.

NASA has developed tens-of-thousands of cutting edge technologies in its quest to explore space, many with the potential to be applied to Earth-based problems. Unfortunately, the private sector often does not know about them or lacks the know-how to modify space technology for terrestrial applications.

"The business technology incuba-

tor is an important tool NASA can use to promote commercially viable uses of publicly developed technology," said Hank Davis, director of JSC's Technology Transfer and Commercialization Office. "NASA-patented technology can be licensed by entrepreneurs who, with the help of the business incubator, can bring to market new commercial products.

"The University of Houston provides a vital element by analyzing Please see **UNIVERSITY**, Page 8



JSC Photo S98-08356 by Mark Sowa

Astronaut Andy Thomas, second from left, gets a warm greeting from STS-91 Commander Charlie Precourt at Ellington Field after completing four and a half months of long-duration space flight aboard the Russian Mir Space Station and closing out the continuous American presence on Mir. Joining Precourt in welcoming Thomas on Sunday are JSC Director George Abbey, far left, and Phase 1 Program Manager Frank Culbertson.

Twenty-five in 1998 astronaut class

Eight candidates already members of JSC work force

Twenty-five women and men will make up the astronaut candidate class of 1998, which will begin one year of training and evaluation at JSC in mid-August.

This year's class consists of eight pilot and 17 mission specialist candidates, including Barbara Morgan, who was named as an educator mission specialist in January. Of the 25 class members, 21 are male and four are female.

Eight of the candidates already live in the

Clear Lake area and work in various capacities at JSC.

The new class members are: Clayton C. Anderson; Lee J. Archambault (Maj., USAF); Tracy E. Caldwell, Ph.D.; Gregory E. Chamitoff, Ph.D.; Timothy J. Creamer (Maj., USA); Christopher J. Ferguson (Lt. Cmdr., USN); Michael J. Foreman (Cmdr., USN); Michael E. Fossum; Kenneth T. Ham (Lt. Cmdr., USN); Patricia C. Hilliard, M.D.;

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American Heritage Week

Team NASA presents fifth annual JSC cultural diversity celebration

JSC will celebrate the diverse cultural backgrounds of its employees, which meld to form a dynamic and well-rounded work force, with its fifth annual American Heritage Week July 6-10.

This year, for the first time, the celebration will involve participation by the entire "Team NASA"—the JSC civil service and contractor employees throughout the Clear Lake area.

"American Heritage Week celebrates the diverse heritage of the entire 'Team NASA,'" said Equal Opportunity Programs Director Estella Hernandez Gillette. "Employees, families and friends of JSC and our aerospace partners come together to

celebrate the similarities that bring us together as well as the differences that allow us to learn and grow together."

Entertainment and exhibits will be presented during the week at the Bldg. 3 cafeteria during lunch and during the grand finale on July 10 beginning at 1 p.m. with a mini-parade around the center, then the grand opening at 3 p.m. at the Gilruth Center.

Entertainers will include the Star Spangled Brass, Cesky' Folklorini Soubor 2 Gtexasu, Jhankar School of Dancing Priyanka Patel, Indian Dancer; O'Maoileidigh Irish Dancers of Houston; Chinese Senior Association of Houston; Almost Good ol' Boys, the

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Employees get one-time chance for retirement switch

JSC civil service employees covered under the Civil Service Retirement System will be given the opportunity to transfer to the Federal Employees Retirement System during a one-time "open season" that runs from July 1-Dec. 31.

This open season is the result of recent legislation passed by Congress and will be a governmentwide event. Any permanent or term employee covered under either CSRS or CSRS offset is eligible.

Each employee's latest SF-50 Notice of Personnel Action Block 30 will show under which system they are being covered. Employees also may contact Employee Services at x32681

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